

## Selected Abstracts From the First Cancer Symposium of the World Federation of Surgical Oncology Societies, March 26–29, 1998, San Diego, California: Introduction

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The World Federation of Surgical Oncology Societies (WFSOS) was established at a meeting in London on February 28, 1992. The events which led to the momentous occasion were detailed in an editorial on the subject which appeared in the *Journal of Surgical Oncology* in May 1996 [1]. Since its inauguration, the World Federation has developed rapidly, so that organisations from 26 nations are now included in its membership.

As explained in the editorial, the Federation has as its declared aim the strengthening and emphasising of the central role of surgery in the management of most of the common cancers. To this end, one of its preoccupations has been with the training and continued education of surgical oncologists. The education committee has become a key factor within the Federation. The council of the Federation has met annually since its inauguration and its affairs have been managed by an elected active executive committee. Over the years, a comprehensive constitution has become defined. One of its expressed objectives has been to provide and facilitate collaboration on a world-wide basis between the established national surgical oncology societies.

The Federation introduced a regular newsletter soon after its inauguration and this has provided a useful means of disseminating information throughout the member societies, as well as to the members of the various national bodies that have joined the Federation. It is hoped, therefore, that the newsletter will provide an even better vehicle for distributing information internationally. However, at best it can only be a somewhat impersonal intermediary and the council, therefore has considered other ways of providing personal contact between its members.

Donald L. Morton, M.D., Director of the John Wayne Cancer Institute in Santa Monica, California, was elected President of the Federation for three years in 1995. It was decided, therefore, to approach the Society for Surgical Oncology (SSO) to enquire whether members of the

other national surgical oncology bodies might attend one of its annual Scientific Congresses. Very generously the Society of Surgical Oncology agreed and planning was implemented for the participation of members of the Federation in the conference which would take place in San Diego, California, in March 1998. This was most appropriate, being the final year of Donald Morton's presidency. This was to be the 51st annual symposium of SSO and the conference was billed jointly as the First World Congress of Surgical Oncology.

The response of members from all the other national societies around the world was very encouraging. The programme of the conference was constructed with a generous allocation of time for contributions from the Federation. There also was adequate facility for members to demonstrate poster material with limited discussion. Such was the response from the WFSOS members to the call for abstracts, that a difficult selection had to be made. Fortunately, many of those who had the disappointment of not being selected for making presentations were able to demonstrate their work as posters.

The congress took place from March 26 to 29, 1998, as planned. Among the highlights of the WFSOS presentations were the presidential address by Donald Morton and the contributions in two planned short symposia. Donald Morton's lecture dealt with the role of cytoreductive surgery in the management of metastatic cancer. The well received lectures reminded the audience of the valuable role that excisional surgery can play in dealing with metastatic disease at many sites. Dr. Morton's own particular contribution to the management of melanoma has received international acclaim. He was able to demonstrate through his own experience the often worthwhile result of combining determined cytoreductive surgery with systemic immunotherapy in patients with apparently hopeless metastatic melanoma.

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The first of the planned WFSOS symposia dealt with the important and provocative topic of the "Surgeon as a Diagnostic Factor in the Outcome of the Cancer Patient". The symposium served to confirm the growing conviction that there is real substance to the concept that "who" does the operation is a key factor in determining outcome. The implications of this cannot be ignored, especially in the construction of prospective clinical trials which include a surgical procedure.

The second small symposium consisted of thoughtful presentation by members of WFSOS council on the "Future of Surgical Oncology Development". They provided a world perspective on the current state of surgical oncology as well as a vision of the future. This must be a future in which the speciality of Surgical Oncology provides the best service possible for patients with malignant disease.

Through the good services of this Journal it is possible to publish the abstracts of the submitted papers presented by WFSOS members in San Diego. These follow this short introductory statement. Also, subject to the agreement of the authors concerned, a selection of these papers will appear in full within the pages of future issues of this Journal. This will be a fitting conclusion to a most successful joint conference, which hopefully will be the precedent of many future similar events. In the words of the retiring President, Donald Morton, this was a major milestone for the World Federation of Surgical Oncology Societies.

## REFERENCE

1. Burn I: The World Federation of Surgical Oncology. *J Surg. Oncol* 1996;62:1-3.